

# 2016-17 Free & Reduced-Price Verification Instructions

Verification is the process by which districts confirm the eligibility of a sample of approved applications for free and reduced-price school meals. Please carefully read through all the instructions before beginning the verification process. Further detailed instructions can be found in the [USDA's Eligibility Manual](#).

## Important Dates:

**Oct 1** - 1.) Record **Application** Counts 2.) Calculate the Sample Size 3.) Send Household Letters  
**Oct 31** - Record **Student** Counts  
**Nov 15** - Deadline to Complete Verification, Submit online in [CNPweb](#).

## Oct 1 – Application Counts - Sample Size – Send Verification Letter(s)

### Application Counts

Use the [paper copy](#) of the verification form as a worksheet to record the category counts.

**4-A:** Record the number of approved **applications** for each category as of October 1 in section 4-A. Student counts should be captured October 31.

**4-1 A Tip: Categorically Free Eligible** include SNAP, TANF (case number), FDPIR or Foster categories but were not confirmed as directly certified nor in the DCA system. In other words proof of eligibility has not been confirmed by agency records and are subject to verification. Applications confirmed as directly certified should only be counted in Section 3.

### Sample Size - Number of Applications to Verify

The applications listed in section 4 are subject to verification because proof of eligibility has NOT been established. Total the number of **applications** reported in section 4, column A. This is your total number of applications in the pool subject to the verification process. Multiply the total number of applications by .03 (3%). This calculation equals the number of applications you will need to verify. Round all decimals up to the next whole number. See example below.

#### Calculation Example – 3%

Section 4	Students approved as FREE or REDUCED PRICE eligible through a household application	<b>**ALL SFAs collecting applications must report Section 4**</b>	A. Number of Applications
		4-1: Approved as categorically FREE Eligible: Based on those providing documentation (e.g. a case number for SNAP, TANF, FDPIR on an application)	1
		4-2: Approved as FREE eligible: Based on household size and income information	24
		4-3: Approved as REDUCED PRICE eligible: Based on household size and income information	17

Section 4 Column A Total = 42  
 X 00.03 (3%)

In this example 2 applications should be randomly selected for the verification process **1.26 = 2 (round up)**

**Confirmation Review** - Prior to sending the verification letters to the household(s), conduct a confirmation review of the application(s) selected for verification to ensure initial determination was accurate.

- Must be a person other than the official who made the initial eligibility determination.
- Document review by the "confirming signature" line of the selected application.

### Method of Verification

Depends on the percent of households who responded to last year's verification process.

- If during last year's verification process, at least 80% or more of the households responded, your district may conduct the Random (Alternate One) method and randomly select 3% of the applications on file to verify.
- If during last year's verification process, less than 80% of the households responded to the verification process, your district is required to conduct the Error Prone (Standard) method and select 3% of applications considered "error-prone" to verify.

## Verifying Household Applications

- Conduct a confirmation review of the application(s) selected for verification prior to sending letters
- Send the prototype "Notification of Selection for Verification" letters to selected household(s)
- Gather/confirm household's proof of eligibility responses
  - Households have 10 days to reply. If no reply, follow-up contact at least 1x (document)
- Send the prototype "Notification of Verification Results" letter to the households
  - If verification results in higher benefits (e.g., a child who is moved from the reduced price to free category), the change is effective immediately and must be implemented no later than 3 operating days later.
  - If verification results in reduced or terminated meal benefits, households must be given 10 calendar days' written advance notice of the change (continue benefits for 10 calendar days).
- Document household responses/nonresponses in section 5-8 on the Verification form

## Oct 31 - Students Counts

Report the number of approved **students** as of October 31<sup>st</sup> for each category (Sections 1 – 4 Column B) and record counts on the [Verification form](#). An updated direct certification report should be reviewed just prior to October 31<sup>st</sup>.

**1-1:** Enrolled Student Counts - This section will auto-populate into the online form in CNPweb.

**2:2:** This section is applicable to **CEP/Provision 2 sites only**

Although sites with CEP/Provision 2 are exempt from the verification process, an October 31<sup>st</sup> student count is required.

**CEP sites** – This data will auto-populate for you

**Provision 2 sites** - Record the number of Prov 2 sites and students in 2-2A & B (non-base year).

**2-2aB:** Multiply the most recent Prov 2 base year FREE percentage by the enrollment reported in 2-2B.

**2-2bB:** Multiply the Prov 2 base year REDUCED PRICE percentage by the enrollment reported in 2-2B.

If ALL school sites are Provision 2 or CEP, check 3-1 & 5-1 and you are finished.

If only SOME school sites participate in Provision 2 or CEP, report as follows:

- Section 3-2: Report SNAP-only direct certification data for the schools NOT participating in CEP/Provision 2.
- Report remaining fields and all other applicable Sections of the FNS-742 for schools NOT participating in CEP/Provision 2/3.

## Section 3-B: Student Counts - Directly Certified/Verified – Oct 31

Students in Section 3 are NOT subject to verification because proof of eligibility has been confirmed. Students can only be counted as being in one category

**3-1:** Leave 3-1 blank (unless *all* school sites are CEP/Provision 2 or RCCI)

### 3-2 B: SNAP Directly Certified Students confirmed through DCA system

- **SNAP always supersedes** – SNAP students directly certified through the DCA system supersede other eligibility categories. For instance, if a student is directly certified with SNAP as well as with another program (e.g. TANF or homeless), count the student as direct cert SNAP in 3-2. *(This item will auto-populate a count from DCA)*

**3-3 B: Students Directly Certified by other source categories:** TANF, FDPIR, homeless, migrant, runaway & foster (proof of participant eligibility confirmed by source or through DCA system). *(This item will auto-populate a count from DCA)*

**3-4 B: Categorically Free Students by household submission of SNAP letter only.** Letters/students that have been validated in the DCA system as directly certified should be counted as SNAP directly certified in 3-2 B.

		<b>**ALL SFAs must report Section 3 or check box 3-1 if applicable**</b>	<b>B. Number of FREE Students</b>
<b>Section 3</b>	<b>Students approved as FREE eligible NOT subject to verification</b>	<b>3-1:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Check the box only if all schools and/or RCCIs in the SFA were not required to perform direct certification with SNAP (i.e. NON BASE year Provision 2/3 for all schools)	
		<b>3-2: Students directly certified through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): Do <u>not</u> include students certified with SNAP through the letter method.</b>	121
		<b>3-3: Students directly certified through other programs: Include those directly certified through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or Medicaid (if applicable); those documented as homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, Head Start, Pre-K Even Start, or non-applicant but approved by local officials. DO NOT include SNAP students already reported in 3-2.</b>	6
		<b>3-4: Students certified categorically FREE eligible through SNAP letter method: Include students certified for free meals through the family providing a letter from the SNAP agency.</b>	1

## Section 4-B: Student Counts – Categorical/Income Free & Reduced – Oct 31

**4-1 B: Categorically Free Students - Approved only due to an application listing case number (SNAP, TANF, FDPIR or Foster Care) but NOT confirmed as directly certified/Not located in DCA.** Foster students that have NOT been confirmed through source records are also counted in section 4-1. Students reported as Categorically Free have NOT been directly certified; proof of eligibility has not been confirmed by the source or agency records. Categorically Free Students that have been confirmed from source records/DCA system are considered Directly Certified and should be recorded in section 3-2 (SNAP direct cert) or 3-3 (other source direct cert). Students can only be counted in one category.

**4-2 B:** Report the number of **Free Income based Students**

**4-3 B:** Report the number of **Reduced-Price Students**

Section 4	Students approved as FREE or REDUCED PRICE eligible through a household application	<b>**ALL SFAs collecting applications must report Section 4**</b>		A. Number of Applications	B. Number of Students
		<b>4-1: Approved as categorically FREE Eligible:</b> Based on those providing documentation (e.g. a case number for SNAP, TANF, FDPIR on an application)		1	3
		<b>4-2: Approved as FREE eligible:</b> Based on household size and income information		24	35
		<b>4-3: Approved as REDUCED PRICE eligible:</b> Based on household size and income information		17	30
T-1: Total FREE Eligible Students Reported:		166	T-2: Total REDUCED PRICE Eligible Students Reported:		30

## Section 5 – Verification Process

**5-1:** Only check the box if **all** school sites are exempt from the verification process. Types of schools exempt to the Verification process include: CEP, Provision 2, Residential Child Care Institutions and Milk only.

**5-2:** Please ensure that the verified application process is completed by November 15<sup>th</sup>.

If you are unable to complete the verification process by November 15, the district must submit a written request to this deadline. See [the Verification Deadline Extension Request Form](#).

**5-3:** For further information, see page 2 for the Method of Verification details and reference the Eligibility Manual.

**5-4:** Only report the number of Error-Prone Applications on file **if** your district had to conduct the Error-Prone method of Verification.

**5-5:** Report the number of applications verified.

- This number should reflect the calculation on page 1 (Total of Section 4 Column A multiplied by .03 (3%).)
- This number should also equal the total number of verified applications in Section 5-8

<b>**ALL SFAs must report Section 5 or check box 5-1 if applicable**</b>				
<b>5-1:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check the box if ALL schools and/or RCCIs are exempt from verification (see instructions for list of exemptions). If 5-1 is checked, no further reporting in Section 5 is required.				
<b>5-2: Was verification performed and completed?</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, completed by November 15th <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, completed after November 15th <input type="checkbox"/> No, verification was NOT performed or the process was not completed.		<b>5-3: Type of Verification process used:</b> 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Standard (Lesser of 3% or 3,000 error-prone) 2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alternate one (Lesser of 3% or 3,000 selected randomly) 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Alternate two (Lesser of 1% or 1,000 error prone applications PLUS lesser of one-half of one percent or 500 applications with SNAP/TANF/FDPIR case numbers)		
If 1 or 3 is checked in 5-3, report 5-4. If 2 is checked in 5-3, enter "N/A" in 5-4.	<b>5-4: Total ERROR PRONE applications:</b> <i>Report all applications as of October 1st considered error prone</i>		<b>5-5: Number of applications selected for verification sample:</b>	2

**5-6:** Direct Verification – Using records from public agencies to verify income and/or program participation

- Check the box if applications selected for the verification process were *not* directly verified

**5-7:** Confirmed through Direct Verification - Report counts in this section if applications selected for the verification process were directly verified/validated with agency records.

<b>tion 5</b>	<b>**ALL SFAs must report 5-7 or check box 5-6 if applicable**</b>		<b>A. Number of Applications</b>	<b>B. Number of Students</b>
	<b>5-6: <input type="checkbox"/> Check the box if direct verification was not conducted in the SFA, (i.e. not one of the schools and/or RCCIs in the SFA performed direct verification). If 5-6 is checked, skip 5-7.</b>			
	Report if FREE and/or REDUCED PRICE eligibility is confirmed through direct verification with SNAP/TANF/FDPIR/MEDICAID as of November 15th	<b>5-7: Confirmed through direct verification:</b>	8	14

## November 15 – Finalize Household Results / Verification Due

**5-8:** Once households selected for the verification process have been verified and given the appropriate time to respond, the results should be documented in Section 5-8 accordingly. The results of the applications verified should be reported by category originally approved for and indicated within the appropriate row stating changes or no changes to their original benefit.

**VC-1:** If any applications were verified “for cause” outside of the verification process (NOT part of the required sample size). Report the number of applications verified for cause and include the results in the appropriate category in 5-8.

## November 15 – Submit Verification Form Online to OPI

Submit the SFA Verification Collection Report online through the [CNPweb system](#). **The electronic verification form will be available once the October claim for reimbursement has been submitted. Paper Versions Will Not Be Accepted.** The PDF/paper version of the form is available for use as a worksheet only. The verification form can be found same section where the monthly claims are entered.

Sponsor Summary					
Packet	Applications	Claims	Payments	Users	
Claim Month		Revision	Status	Claim Amount	Action
September 2015	Sponsor Claim	0	Paid		<a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Revise</a>
October 2015	Sponsor Claim	0	Paid		<a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Revise</a>
Form Name	Revision	Status	Date Approved	Action	
Verification Summary	0	Approved		<a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">Revise</a>	

### CNPweb Online Verification Form Features

The system pre-fills some of the items for you. Items such as the SFA Name, SFA ID, SFA City, Zip Code and the Number of Schools will automatically populate on the verification form. The number of Directly Certified students will also auto-populate a count referenced from the [DCA system](#). Edit checks have been built into the form to correct data entry errors.

Contact Alie Wolf at [aliew@mt.gov](mailto:aliew@mt.gov) or (406) 444-4413 with any further verification questions.